

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 and 45-48 were pending in the application at the time the present Office Action was mailed. Claims 1, 6, 13, and 45 have been amended to clarify aspects of the applicants' technology. Claims 14-15 are canceled by this response. Accordingly, claims 1-13 and 45-48 are pending.

The applicants' representative would like to thank the Examiner for his consideration during a telephone interview completed on March 31, 2005. During that telephone interview, the applicants' representative and the Examiner discussed differences between pending claim 1 and U.S. Patent No. 6,769,012 ("Liu"). Further details relating to the discussion are provided below. Should the Examiner require additional details relating to the interview, the applicants' representative encourages the Examiner to contact the undersigned.

The Office Action objected to claim 45 as having an informality. The applicants have amended claim 45 to correct the informality.

The Office Action rejected claims 1-15 and 45-48 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,496,849 ("Hanson") in view of Liu. The applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

As stated in the Office Action, "Hanson does not explicitly state providing the author of the original message." (Office Action, page 11, ¶ 21.) The Office Action adds that "Hanson does include retrieving the author and email address of the original message when the applet is created." (Id.) As stated in the applicants' response of September 28, 2004, "Hanson teaches that the creator's name is included in [its] electronic form... because Hanson's creator is not the 'sender' of the electronic mail message." (Applicants response of September 28, 2004, pages 8-9.) Hanson does not identify that a collaborative message that is modified by a recipient is identified by an email client application as from the author.

Liu also neither teaches nor suggests displaying an indication of a collaborative electronic mail message as originating from its author. Liu discloses a "secure virtual

mailbox between two users." (Liu, 3:31-32.) The Office Action points to Liu's Figure 3 as teaching that the original author is displayed with responses (e.g., modifications) to a collaborative electronic message. (Office Action, page 4.) However, Liu depicts a threaded discussion in Figure 3. Figure 3 is similar to Figure 2. (Liu, 6:1.) Figure 2 illustrates "a plurality of messages between a sender (16) and recipient (18)... in a hierarchical structure having an initial message of new subject matter and a plurality of replies. Each new subject matter and related replies forms a thread." (Liu, 5:1-46.) As is plainly evident from Figures 2 and 3, each response identifies its sender and not the author. As an example, "ABC Corp." responded to a thread authored by "John Doe" having the title "Request for quote." (Figures 2 and 3.) Thus, the author is not identified as the sender in responses illustrated in these figures.

During the telephone interview, the Examiner pointed out that when threads are collapsed to show only the original message, as is illustrated in Figure 4, only the original author is displayed. As the Examiner agreed during the telephone interview, Liu neither teaches nor suggests that a message corresponding to the original message displayed in Figure 4 would show the full extent of the collaboration. In Figure 4, "[t]he thread heading is display (sic, displayed) along with the number of related messages." (Liu, 6:30-31.) Figure 4 illustrates a way to provide "a quick overview of the communications between the two parties without having to view all related messages." (Liu, 6:27-29; emphasis added.) Thus, Figure 4 does not illustrate collaborative messages. Furthermore, the author is not indicated as the sender of replies.

In the applicants' technology, even when a recipient of a collaborative electronic mail message modifies the collaborative electronic mail message such as by responding, an electronic mail client application identifies the author as the sender. As discussed above, the applied references neither teach nor suggest this feature. The applicants have amended the pending claims to clarify these aspects of their technology. As an example, claim 1 is amended to recite "indicating, to the computing device, a modification to the collaborative electronic mail message resulting from a comment being added to the feedback portion by a recipient, wherein the electronic mail

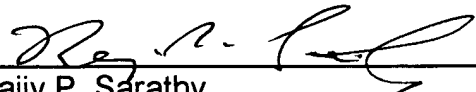
client application of the computing device updates the displayed indication of the new electronic mail message that includes the name of the author."

Because the independent claims recite a feature that is not found in the applied references, the applicants submit that these claims are now allowable. Furthermore, because the dependent claims import the limitations of the independent claims from which they depend, the dependent claims are also allowable. Moreover, the claims recite a novel combination of elements that is neither taught nor suggested by the applied references.

Based on the above amendments and remarks, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application and its early allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 359-6478.

Respectfully submitted,
Perkins Coie LLP

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Rajiv P. Sarathy
Registration No. 55,592

Correspondence Address:

Customer No. 45979
Perkins Coie LLP
P.O. Box 1247
Seattle, Washington 98111-1247
(206) 359-8000